

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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SELENDANG AYU :
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INTERVIEW OF 3RD ENGINEER :
MUTHA BALAUBRAMANIAM :
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An interview in the above entitled matter was held
on Friday, December 17, 2004, commencing at 10:50 a.m.,
before:

BRIAN CURTIS, NTSB
DARRELL HOWELLS, USCG
CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE, IMC

1 you said 10 o'clock. Just one more time, explain the
2 discrepancy, or why the discrepancy there? THIRD

3 ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: On the day we (indiscernible) on
4 the night, Captain told (indiscernible) to stick to the
5 time, 12:15 as the stopping time because he entered in the
6 base log book in that way.

7 So, we all have to (indiscernible) tell
8 accordingly, but before the second interview, he told that
9 here is good to accept the right time of stopping on main
10 engine so you tell the truth, and apologize for that --
11 stopping time and the time I erred engine (indiscernible)
12 way.

13 So, I want to -- as I told in second interview
14 that I want to change the timing that when -- what time I
15 was called, and from there, I started going to engine room.

16 MR. CURTIS: Who else did he tell this to?
17 Anybody else there when he told you?

18 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Regarding
19 correcting the time? MR.

20 CURTIS: Yes, sir.

21 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Regarding
22 correcting the time, or --

23 MR. CURTIS: Yes, well, first regarding using
24 12:15.

25 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: He gathered all

1 the people who are there, staying in the hotel,
2 (indiscernible). He called everyone and told them, and when
3 the first group from the (indiscernible) they also arrived
4 after one or two days, I don't remember. He, again,
5 gathered everyone and told the same thing.

6 MR. CURTIS: He told you twice?

7 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah. MR.
8 CURTIS: Did he say, initially, why he wanted to use 12:15
9 as a time?

10 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, I told since
11 you know, escaped from the narrow, you know, threat of our
12 lives. I told, why to change things? Especially me, I was
13 not convinced, and he told, on the first time. I told let
14 us tell the truth. It will be easy for us to tell the
15 truth, and it will (indiscernible) but somehow he managed to
16 convince me and everyone to go along with him.

17 MR. CURTIS: In light of this, I'd like to go back
18 through the morning of the 6th, the morning that the engine
19 failed, what happened, just to get a clear representation of
20 what you did that morning, say, starting from 8:00 a.m.

21 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: I would like to
22 start from 12:00 to 4:00 that was my watch --

23 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

24 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- on the same
25 day, early morning, and the watch was (indiscernible) and it

1 was no problem at all. I was relieved by second engineer at
2 4 o'clock morning. I had a conversation with him regarding
3 everything back to (indiscernible) watch that
4 (indiscernible) everything is going to fine. If he wants to
5 change to (indiscernible) watch, let us (indiscernible)
6 watch in the afternoon.

7 So, that I just discussed with him, and later on I
8 had my sandwich, and then I went to sleep. Then, I got a
9 call. Usually, I get up 11 0'clock, or I get up, or I get a
10 call. Then, I have my meal. Then, I go down, 10, 15
11 minutes before my watch that is 12 o'clock afternoon, but on
12 that day, I got a call. It's -- the time is -- I cannot say
13 the exact time, it is 10:00 to 10:30 (indiscernible).

14 I got a call. It might have been when I was
15 sleeping. Chief engineer called me, and told he stopped
16 engine. I asked why we stopped engine. You come down
17 immediately. I asked what happened? He said we have a
18 liner crack on a number three unit, come fast.

19 I kept the phone, got ready, and went down. I
20 went into control room first, and I met chief engineer and
21 second engineer talking, in the control room. Then I asked
22 same thing I did, what happened? This number three unit,
23 liner cracked. So, we're planning what to do now.

24 MR. CURTIS: This planning went on for some time?
25 When did they decide -- what happened from -- you went down

1 there, you say, between 10:00 and 10:30?

2 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah. MR.

3 CURTIS: What happened between there and noontime?

4 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: I -- they were
5 talking, and I was around there, and seeing what they were
6 looking at. They were referring to the manual, BMW manual.
7 Then, I thought, okay, I'll -- let me see the crack first.
8 Then, I went around, I asked -- before only I asked it's
9 the crack on the top (indiscernible)? I went there and saw
10 it's a crack. Then I came back and asked what to do now?
11 He said wait, we have -- we're going to take a
12 (indiscernible). Meanwhile, I, in my own
13 interest, I was seeing the manual. I went up
14 (indiscernible) manual was, so another manual, I was
15 checking (indiscernible) and what all the things we have to
16 do for preparation for isolating that particular unit. So,
17 I just made a note of it, what myself and Captain would
18 need, and started looking for those tools.

19 For fuel pump, we have to use a chain, and a
20 pulley net. You have to turn the (indiscernible). I was
21 doing that (indiscernible) .

22 MR. CURTIS: So, afternoon time, from your
23 previous event line, you gave us, is there anything
24 different from noontime on, or is all the same?

25 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Everything is

1 same. They're even sir, same. MR.

2 CURTIS: Okay.

3 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: There's no change
4 in whatever I told right from the first today.

5 MR. CURTIS: Since your last interview, do you
6 recall anything that you may have neglected to tell us, or
7 thought of in the meantime that you may want us to know?
8 Anytime during the event line, any details appreciated.

9 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Nothing else.
10

11 MR. CURTIS: Was the captain in the control room
12 with the chief and the second?

13 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: The first time
14 when I went, I don't remember I see him, but quite often,
15 captain and chief engineer, I saw him, and then around
16 (indiscernible) engine room.

17 MR. CURTIS: Alarms, did you ever hear an alarm,
18 or see an alarm, or check the log of the alarms? If this --

19 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, I didn't check
20 (indiscernible). We use to get a printout for each and
21 every one. I did not bother to see that. MR.

22 CURTIS: Do you have an alarm panel in your room? In your
23 cabin?

24 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, if it is for
25 my cabin, I'll get an alarm.

1 MR. CURTIS: So, only if it was on your cabin?
2 The alarm would only ring in your cabin if it was on your
3 cabin?

4 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, it's
5 supposed to -- you must watch and manned watch, if nobody is
6 there. Like I put this -- (indiscernible) that engine was
7 totally going to be locked, and engine is running,
8 everything's okay, then the (indiscernible) switch. You put
9 (indiscernible) third engineer's cabin, and you come -- the
10 light will be on, and see the panels working. If there is
11 alarm, it will come in my cabin. I'll go accept that and
12 then go down and exit from the engine room, and
13 (indiscernible).

14 MR. CURTIS: In this case, you wouldn't have heard
15 the alarm in your room anyway, and in the engine room, you
16 didn't hear any alarms related to the problem?

17 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, I think I
18 already -- the engine was stopped, and the precautions were
19 taken.

20 MR. CURTIS: Just a clarification, you said UMS
21 that stands for?

22 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Unmanned
23 (indiscernible) Space.

24 MR. CURTIS: Unmanned -- okay. That's all I have
25 right now. I'll pass it on to Captain Lew.

1 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Captain Lew here. You
2 mentioned that you started looking for tools, can you be a
3 bit more specific?

4 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: About fuel
5 injection pump to turn the -- you have to -- fuel injection
6 (indiscernible) is having -- at the bottom of the fuel
7 injection (indiscernible) there's a roller, which is having
8 a contact with the cap. So, that we isolate so that it
9 doesn't have a contact when the can is coming to the
10 (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) it is supposed to operate
11 and not have a contact, to be isolated.

12 For that we need a -- it's kind of a -- you have a
13 chain, and you -- like a pulley, where you can -- with the
14 teeth, it's a V. So, you (indiscernible) that. There are
15 lug nuts, and everything is there. So, I have to get the
16 tools for that and a special tool is the one chain and
17 the -- that pulley. So, I mean to say the tools is
18 (indiscernible).

19 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Did chief engineer explain
20 to you that they were going to isolate this unit itself, and
21 that it was -- this (indiscernible) with the manual placed
22 in front?

23 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: It was
24 clearly -- it was the decision of -- what was the order, I
25 presumed is the very clear. It is from chief engineer and

1 second engineer, both were together, and they took the
2 position, and it was told to me that we are going to isolate
3 the number three unit, and the procedure which we have to
4 follow is -- they had written on the (indiscernible) maker's
5 manual, and points supposed to be there, they're being
6 followed. Step by step being followed all those.

7 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: On the day that the captain
8 spoke to you that he is going to tell the truth, was it
9 spoke to you only in private, or in the presence of others'
10 officer too?

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Exactly, I don't
12 remember. Just, I think second officer, forty to thirty
13 minute, myself. All the three were there.

14 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Okay, no further questions.

15 MR. HOWELLS: This is Darrell Howells. Mutha, are
16 you familiar with the emergency stand in the engine room?

17 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Pardon, sir?

18 MR. HOWELLS: The emergency stand in the engine
19 room is -- can you tell me about that?

20 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Emergency stand,
21 the location is -- we have top platform. Down below is the
22 (indiscernible) shop and lubricators. That platform is
23 there. The emergency starting stand is in front of number
24 six unit, number six unit. So, you want to know the steps?

25 MR. HOWELLS: Yes, sir.

1 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: You have
2 to -- we -- there are three things to be done. One is
3 changing all switches.

4 MR. HOWELLS: I'm sorry?

5 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: It is --

6 MR. HOWELL: Changing?

7 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Changing all
8 switches --

9 MR. HOWELLS: Switches, okay.

10 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- (indiscernible)
11 the control room. There is one, and the other switch is as
12 turn the (indiscernible). The third one is having a wheel
13 where you can move the -- up in various (indiscernible) that
14 you can move. There is one more (indiscernible) start
15 position, and beside that there is a wheel, which will
16 disintegrate the remote and emergency.

17 So, first you disengage. Then, you put to
18 emergency position, starting position. (Indiscernible)
19 is -- can be decided as (indiscernible). Then, you have a
20 press button from where you (indiscernible). Then, move the
21 wheel to start, and (indiscernible) solutions are there, so
22 (indiscernible) beside push.

23 MR. HOWELLS: Is there any sort of checklist there
24 to help you?

25 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yes, there is a

1 checklist for emergency operation. It is hung right in
2 front of that.

3 MR. HOWELLS: Was that emergency stand used to try
4 to start the engine?

5 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: I think it was
6 tried once. Once (indiscernible).

7 MR. HOWELLS: Did you ever look at -- when -- I
8 understand that the other cylinders were inspected after it
9 wouldn't start. What were the conditions of the other
10 cylinders, the units, the pistons?

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: The other condition,
12 other cylinders were okay. It means the pistons were right,
13 (indiscernible) conditions were not bad. It was okay, and
14 it was not that carbonatious (phonetic sp.) or no
15 (indiscernible), or --

16 MR. HOWELLS: When you looked at those pistons,
17 did you look from port and starboard side, or just one side?

18 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: I looked from port
19 side. The under piston space (indiscernible) are there. I
20 looked from there. I did not go inside (indiscernible)
21 space. That is on the starboard side. Second engineer and
22 chief engineer (indiscernible).

23 MR. HOWELLS: Is there anything else other than
24 the correcting of the time that the captain, or anyone else
25 said to say this instead of that?

1 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, nothing else.
2 Only the time, the stopping time, and the time when I
3 (indiscernible). Only those things. (Indiscernible) same.
4 Whatever the sequence of things which were (indiscernible)
5 on the engine, were all same.

6 MR. HOWELLS: Did I understand you to say that
7 when you got to the engine room that morning, it was already
8 secured? You were asleep. The chief engineer called you?

9 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yes.

10 MR. HOWELLS: You went to the engine room?

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah. MR.

12 HOWELLS: Engine running, or was it stopped? THIRD

13 ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Engine was very stopped.

14 (indiscernible) was isolated.

15 MR. HOWELLS: The (indiscernible) was isolated?

16 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: In the sense. Number
17 three unit was leaking, so they isolated the
18 (indiscernible). That particular unit (indiscernible) are
19 not good, and it was because it was leaking.

20 MR. HOWELLS: Are there valves to shut that? I'm
21 a little confused. The engine was stopped?

22 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah. MR.

23 HOWELLS: And you said the (indiscernible) was isolated?

24 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: I want to support
25 that thing, because when I were preparing for this, then it

1 was told. I asked him, was this one -- what about jacket?
2 He said it is ready, close to. After stopping the engine,
3 then (indiscernible) toward the leakage, from the leakage.

4 MR. HOWELLS: Okay, I'm sorry, a little slower.

5 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Huh?

6 MR. HOWELLS: Stopped the
7 engine, they stopped the engine?

8 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: They stopped the
9 engine. When I went to control room, the engine was already
10 stopped.

11 MR. HOWELLS: Okay, got that. The jacket water,
12 isolate the jacket water, are there valves to close?

13 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, valves.

14

15 MR. HOWELLS: If you were -- underway, and can you
16 isolate that unit without stopping the engine?

17 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: You mean to say
18 the fighting of that part of -- isolate in the sense it is
19 fighting, cannot.

20 MR. HOWELLS: Okay.

21 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: You need to stop
22 the engine, the part of disconnecting that particular fuel
23 injection cam, you have to stop the engine.

24 MR. HOWELLS: I got you. You went to the engine
25 room, and started the isolation process. It was your

1 responsibility to secure the fuel, is that correct?

2 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah. MR.

3 HOWELLS: What was the fourth engineer's responsibility? Do
4 you know?

5 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: It's not -- I
6 cannot say it's responsibility, but I -- it was told to me
7 that I should support the second engineer for --

8 MR. HOWELLS: Okay.

9 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- isolating this.
10 It was not down (indiscernible).

11 MR. HOWELLS: Once the work started to isolate
12 that unit, eventually, you went back up for your meal, and
13 that was towards the end of the normal meal hours, is that
14 correct?

15 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

16 MR. HOWELLS: Then you ate, and your watch was the
17 12:00 to 4:00?

18 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

19 MR. HOWELLS: Did you come back down --

20 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Immediately.

21 MR. HOWELLS: -- and finish your watch?

22 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Immediately. That
23 would not be more than 10 minutes (indiscernible).

24 MR. HOWELLS: Okay.

25 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: (Indiscernible.)

1 MR. HOWELLS: And you stood your watch from 12:00
2 to 4:00?

3 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: There's no watch
4 because --

5 MR. HOWELLS: Well, you were working on the --

6 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- everyone was
7 working.

8 MR. HOWELLS: Everyone was working. Do you
9 recall -- when you left the engine room, do you recall what
10 time, approximately?

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, I will do
12 (indiscernible).

13 MR. HOWELLS: Was there any discussion about how
14 long the isolation should take? Is that a two-hour job, a
15 six-hour job?

16 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, regarding the
17 time, it was not discussed. The (indiscernible)
18 was -- after isolation you should start. This was the
19 (indiscernible).

20 MR. HOWELLS: Do you recall what time they
21 started -- tried to start the engine again?

22 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: I don't know.

23 MR. HOWELLS: Okay, that's all I have.

24 MR. CURTIS: Mutha, just a couple questions.
25 Brian Curtis again. The emergency stand where you can

1 operate the engine from, if you operate it from the
2 emergency stand location, does that by pass the automation
3 in the trips on the engine, do you know?

4 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: I don't know.
5 It's not supposed to. (Indiscernible) was there on trips
6 which (indiscernible).

7 MR. CURTIS: In your opinion, do you think it was
8 possible that there was a trip on the engine that wasn't
9 allowing it to start? Instead of the lack of compression,
10 possibly --

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: There was no trip.
12 It was active.

13 MR. CURTIS: No trips were acted on the panel?

14 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

15 MR. HOWELLS: I'm just trying to read my writing.

16 On the fuel, just for clarification, how do you
17 isolate -- you don't blank -- do you blank the fuel line, or
18 you take back off the fuel injector? How do you blank the
19 fuel from going into the cylinder?

20 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Once the fuel
21 injection pump is isolated by way of moving the -- probably
22 disconnecting the roller. Disconnecting means not removing,
23 it is just disconnecting means it will be kept up away from
24 the can. So, also you close the inlet of the fuel injection
25 pump. Fuel line is coming for individual pumps, there is a

1 cork, we close that.

2 MR. CURTIS: How do you hold the injector up? Is
3 there a block you put under it?

4 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Injectors, fuel
5 injectors are in place. All the pipes and everything is in
6 place.

7 MR. CURTIS: I mean the pump. How do you hold it
8 up? What holds it up there off the can?

9 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: The pump is going
10 to be there, and it's (indiscernible) cannot be moved.

11 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

12 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: You're not going
13 to -- that's very laborious. That cannot be moved. As for
14 the procedure, it is -- I cannot explain it exactly. It is
15 (indiscernible) up -- the plunger and the roller --

16 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

17 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- whatever is
18 there, it can move only up and down.

19 MR. CURTIS: Correct.

20 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- it cannot move
21 sideways, and weight of the can is about -- more than one
22 inch. It is our (indiscernible) --

23 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

24 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- our weight, and
25 so, it is not that little movement, it is just putting it

1 up. I cannot explain more than this.

2 MR. CURTIS: You lift the roller off the can?

3 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, that's
4 right.

5 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have. Captain Lew?

6 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Captain Lew here. Can you
7 remember who tried to stop the engine on the emergency
8 control mode?

9 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Second engineer,
10 and chief engineer also was (indiscernible).

11 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: After that when you was
12 unsuccessful, what was the next action that it take, can you
13 remember?

14 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Well
15 those -- there is change oil back to control room, and I
16 think they applied from there.

17 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Can you also remember when
18 the fuel heating system was stopped to the fuel oil tanks?

19 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Fuel oil tank
20 heating one six, it was neutral. I think those
21 (indiscernible) one day before. Only number two tank it was
22 closed.

23 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Can you please repeat that
24 again?

25 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: One six, I don't

1 think it was closed. I don't remember. I think it was
2 closed one seven. Only number two (indiscernible).

3 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Okay, no other question.

4 MR. CURTIS: I believe that's all the questions
5 here today, Mutha. Thank you very much for coming in. The
6 time now is 11:15, and this concludes the interview. Thank
7 you, sir.

8 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Thank you very
9 much.

10 (Whereupon, at 11:15 a.m., the interview was
11 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

DEPOSITION SERVICES, INC., hereby certifies that the attached pages represent an accurate transcript of the electronic sound recording of the proceedings of the National Transportation Safety Board Interview regarding the grounding of the Selendang Ayu on December 9, 2004.

INTERVIEW OF THIRD ENGINEER:
MUTHA BALAUBRAMANIAM

Eve Jemison, Transcriber